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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 000423

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TAGS: SENV ECON ENRG KGHG PREL JA

SUBJECT: JAPANESE ENVIRONMENT MINISTER LOOKS FOR CONTINUED
U.S.-JAPAN COOPERATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires James Zumwalt, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Japan Environment Minister Saito called for continuing strong U.S.-Japan cooperation on climate change, including on efforts to bring China into a post-Kyoto framework, during his February 17 meeting with Climate Change Special Envoy Stern. The Japanese Minister also proposed sending senior GOJ climate change/energy officials to Washington to meet with the new Administration's team following the February 24 U.S./Japan Summit. Saito pointed to Japan's work with China to reduce GHG emissions/improve energy efficiency through technology transfer and said U.S.-Japan cooperation in that area could help China and the other major developing countries sign on to and meaningfully participate in a new international framework. Saito said his conversations with responsible Chinese ministers show the PRC would accept a framework that calls for it to reduce emissions below a business as usual scenario. S/E Stern said the U.S. is committed to addressing climate change and concluding a new framework agreement in Copenhagen and appreciates Japan's emphasis on the emerging market economies action and participation. Discussing Japan's plans for announcing domestic GHG emissions cuts, Saito noted while some industries are not on board, there was no significant difference among Japan's political parties. He anticipates no serious change in the direction of climate change policies, regardless of which party wins Japan's elections later this year. End summary.

Seeking Continued Close Cooperation with the U.S.

¶2. (C) Environment Minister Tetsuo Saito met Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern February 17 in Tokyo to discuss U.S.-Japan cooperation in negotiating a post-Kyoto climate change agreement. In an unusual move for a Japanese minister, Saito included senior figures from the other concerned agencies -- the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) -- as well as from his own Environment Ministry.

¶3. (C) Saito said he is encouraged by the President's stance on climate change and called the issue the biggest challenge facing the U.S. and Japan. He proposed sending an interagency team of Japan's senior climate officials, headed by MOFA DG for Global Affairs Sugiyama, to Washington to meet with S/E Stern and other U.S. counterparts immediately following the just announced February 24 U.S.-Japan summit. While he said he agreed to such a meeting in principle, S/E Stern noted he would have to check regarding the timing, adding he and other U.S. senior climate officials had only been on the job for a few days.

Getting China and Others to Participate Meaningfully

¶4. (C) For Japan's part, Saito hopes to indicate the direction of Japan's thinking on a mid-term greenhouse gas reduction target by the Ad hoc Working Group at the end of March and stated the Prime Minister would announce the target by June. It is most important the major developing nations, particularly China, participate in the new climate framework and the U.S. and Japan must work together to that end, he said.

¶5. (C) S/E Stern said the U.S. is committed to concluding an agreement on a post-Kyoto framework at UNFCCC COP 15 in Copenhagen, but it must be an agreement Congress will pass. In the meantime, he said the U.S. would move as fast as

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possible to make progress on cutting domestic emissions. Regarding the major developing countries, he said their participation is critical. Japan's emphasis on developing country participation was exactly right, he added. S/E Stern said that, while the U.S. believes both mid-term and longer-term goals are important, the negotiations should not be locked into a 1990 baseline year. A 25-40 percent reduction by 2020 from 1990 levels was not realistic for the United States.

¶6. (C) Saito said Japan's past cooperation with China on technology to limit emissions would continue and he pointed to Japan's "Co-benefit" approach, involving projects which both lower GHG emissions and reduce other air pollutants through technology transfer. He said the U.S. and Japan could work together on such projects to bring China and major developing countries into a new international framework. Raising reports of an announcement of a U.S.-China partnership on global warming, he said the GOJ would like to talk with the USG regarding how it might help support such an effort.

¶7. (C) S/E Stern said the U.S. is interested in stepping up its efforts with China and sees opportunities to work with Japan and the EU in that regard. Dealings between the U.S. and China on climate should be on a constructive, productive footing, he added. Saito said, based on his conversations with the Chinese head of delegation at Poznan, China recognizes it needs to take steps that will be respected by the international community. While an emissions reduction target might not be possible for China, Saito suggested a goal such as 20-30 percent below business as usual would be possible for China to accept.

The GOJ Thinking on Domestic GHG Targets

¶8. (C) Regarding mid-term GHG reduction goals, Saito said an ambitious goal is necessary for three reasons: 1) it is supported by the science, 2) an ambitious developed country target would help get emerging country participation, and 3) such a target would spur technological development. Japan is moving towards announcing targets, but some industrial

sectors have remained opposed. Nevertheless, the Minister expects the PM to proceed as he announced at Davos and announce medium term targets in June.

¶9. (C) In conclusion, Saito touched on Japan's political situation and elections. He said no matter which party wins the election, there would be no major change in the direction of Japan's climate change policy. Both of the major parties agree on the seriousness of the issue, along with his party, current coalition junior party New Komeito.

¶10. (U) Meeting participants:

Japan

- Minister of the Environment Tetsuo Saito
- Hideki Minamikawa, Director General, Minister's Secretariat, MOE
- Amb. Shinsuke Sugiyama, Director General for Global Issues, MOFA
- Tatsushi Terada, Director General for Global Environment, MOE
- Masaru Moriya, Councilor for Global Environment, MOE
- Jun Arima, Deputy Director General for Global Environmental Affairs, METI
- Kunihiro Shimada, Principal International Negotiator, Office of International Strategy on Climate Change, MOE

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United States

- Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern
- Robert Cekuta, Minister Counselor for Economic Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Tokyo
- Bart Cobbs, Environment, Science and Technology Unit Chief, U.S. Embassy, Tokyo

¶11. (U) S/E Stern cleared this cable subsequent to his departure from Tokyo.

ZUMWALT